- WHERE - the sectors, zones, axis of attack, avenues of approach, and objectives that make up the COA.
- HOW - the method by which the threat will employ his assets, such as dispositions, location of main effort, the scheme of maneuver, and how it will be supported.
- WHY - the objective or end state the threat intends to accomplish.

Consider threat forces available to at least one level of command above your own when developing each COA. For example, a battalion S2 would consider the COAs available to threat regiments and brigades. This helps to ensure that you account for possible reinforcing forces and the higher command's own objectives and intent.

Time permitting, the final product should consist of a comprehensive, detailed set of threat COAs. Work to a degree of resolution at two levels of command below your own. For example, a brigade S2 would depict the missions and actions of threat battalions and companies in the threat COAs he develops.

Each developed threat COA has three parts:

- A situation template.
- A description of the COA and options.
- A listing of HVTs.

Situation Template:
Situation templates are graphic depictions of expected threat dispositions should he adopt a particular COA. They usually depict the most critical point in the operation as agreed upon by the G2 and G3. However, you might prepare several templates representing different "snapshots in time" starting with the threat's initial array of forces. These are useful in depicting points where the threat might adopt branches or sequels to the main COA, places where the threat is especially vulnerable, or other key points in the battle such as initial contact with friendly forces. You use situation templates to support staff wargaming and develop event templates.

To construct a situation template, begin with the threat model representing the operation under consideration. Overlay the doctrinal template on the products that depict the battlefield environment's effects on operations. Typically, the product of choice is the MCOO, but this may vary with the situation (see Figure 2-13).

Using your judgment and knowledge of the threat's preferred tactics and doctrine as depicted in the threat model, adjust the dispositions portrayed on the doctrinal template to account for the battlefield environment's effects. Obviously, there will be many options available. Attempt to view the situation from the point of view of the threat commander when selecting from among them.

Check the situation template to ensure that you have accounted for all the threat's major assets, and that none have been inadvertently duplicated (see Figure 2-14).

Ensure that the template reflects the main effort identified for this COA. Compare the depicted dispositions to the threat's known doctrine; check for consistency. Consider the threat's desire. to present an ambiguous situation and achieve surprise.

Include as much detail on the situation template as the time and situation warrant. For example, if the threat is defending, identify the likely engagement areas, reinforcing obstacle

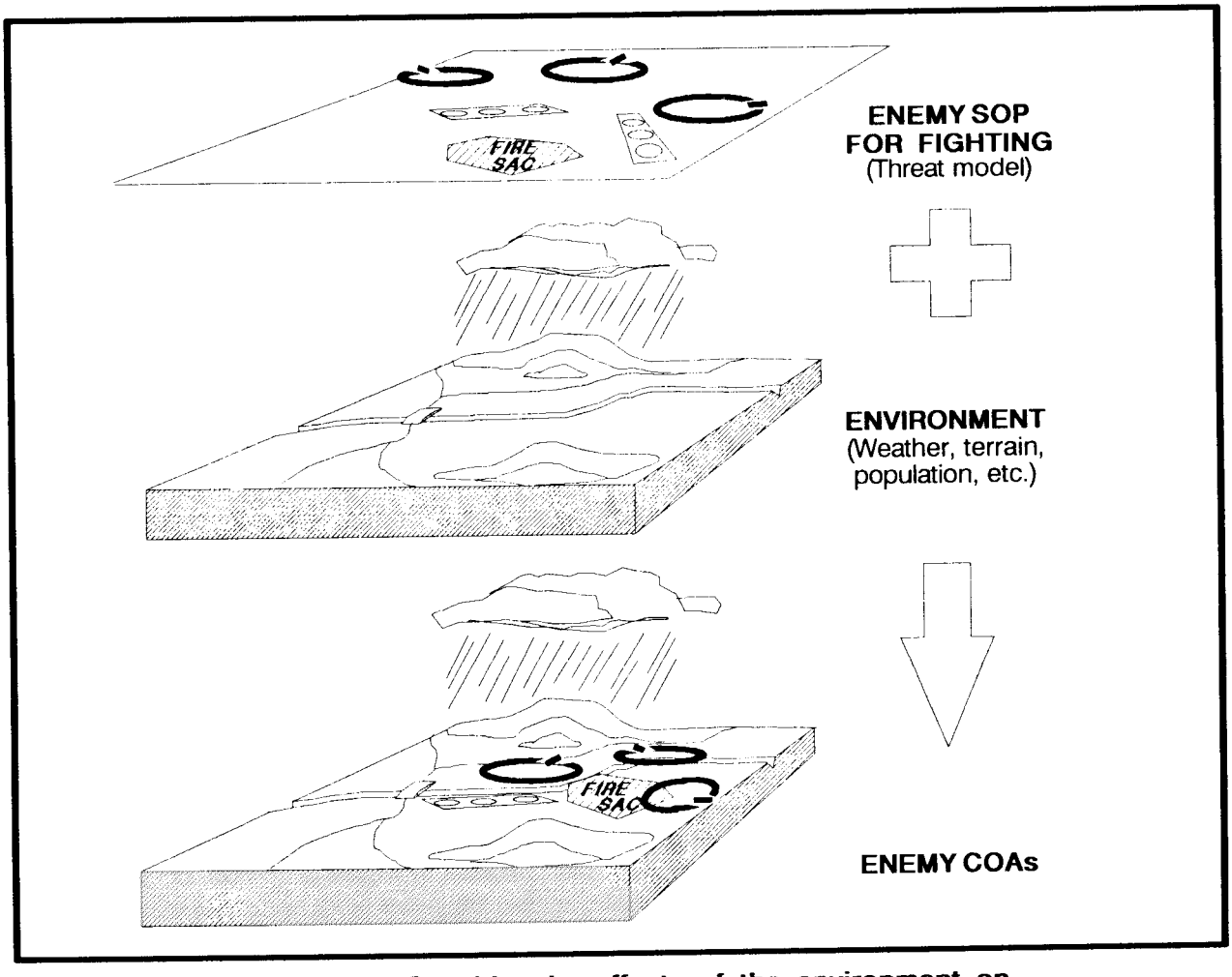

Figure 2-13. Consider the effects of the environment on the threat's doctrine to develop threat COAs.

systems, and counterattack objectives that form part of his defensive COA. Ensure you depict the locations and activities of the HVTs listed in the threat model.

Next, using the description of preferred tactics that accompanies the doctrinal template as a guide, think through the COA's scheme of maneuver. Attempt to visualize how the threat will transition from his current positions to those depicted on the template.

Mentally wargame the scheme of maneuver from the positions depicted on the template through to the COA's success or failure. Identify points where forces will transition from one formation to another, potential assembly areas, and so forth. After working through the scheme of maneuver, identify how each of the BOSs "fits in" and supports the operation.

Evaluate time and space factors to develop time phase lines (TPLs) depicting threat movement. Draw TPLs on the template to depict the expected progress of attacking forces, the movement of reserves or counterattacking forces, and the movement of forces in the deep and rear battle areas.

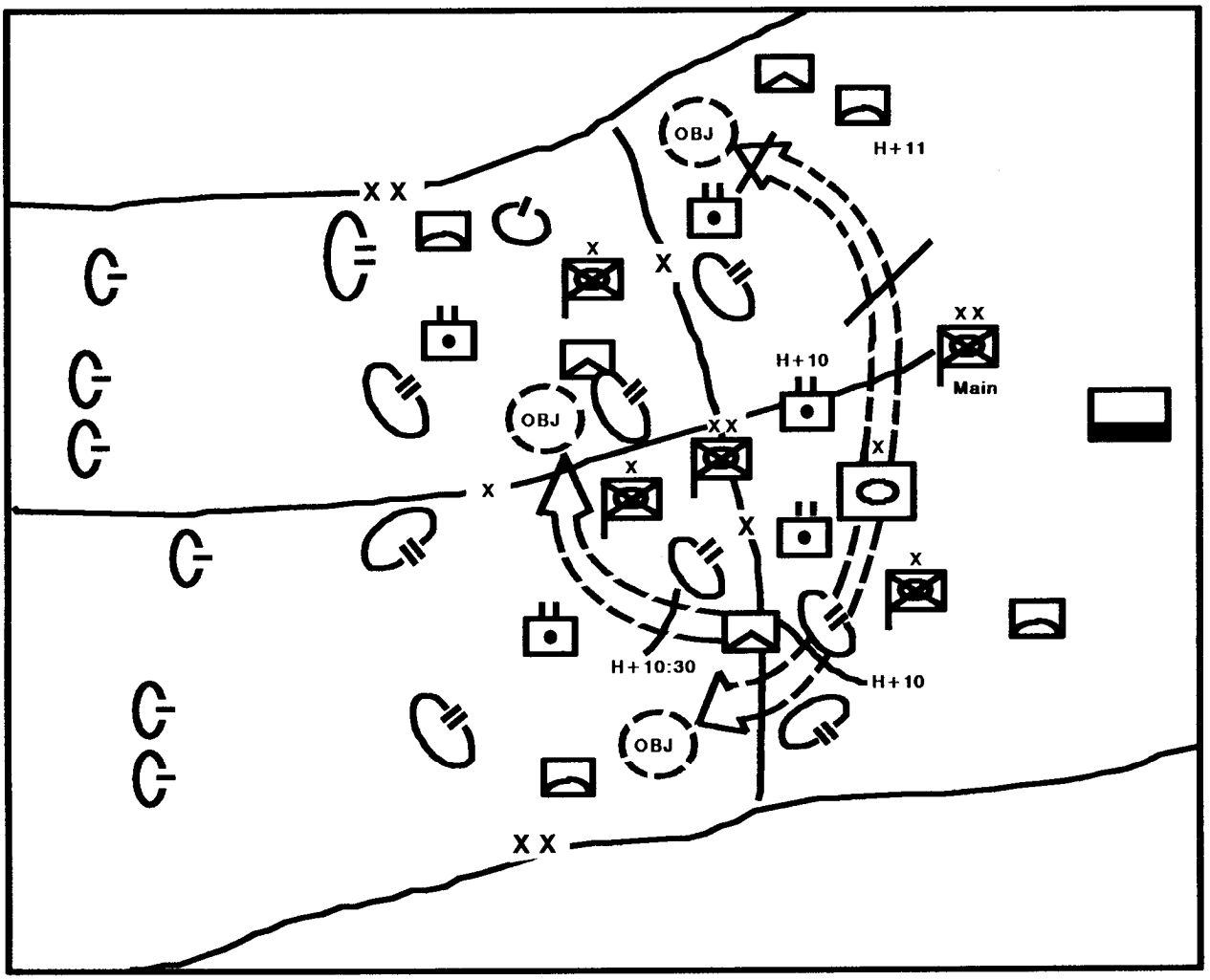

Figure 2-14. Situation templates depict threat COA.

Base TPLs on the threat's doctrinal rates of movement, with some modification. Evaluate actual movement rates, as revealed in the data base, with written doctrine. Consider the effects of the battlefield environment on mobility. If contact with friendly forces is expected, mentally wargame the effects this will have on the threat's speed as well.

When placing TPLs, consider only the time it will take to adopt movement formations, time to conduct movement to the selected location, and time for the unit to close after arrival. This assumes that time-consuming planning, issuance of orders, reconnaissance, and logistical preparations may occur during movement.

During staff wargaming of the situation templates against potential friendly COAs, update TPLs to consider when threat movement will be triggered or how they might be influenced by friendly actions.

Prepare as many graphics as necessary to depict the COA in enough detail to support staff wargaming and collection planning. For example, a COA may begin as a movement to contact, transition to a hasty attack, followed by pursuit operations that include a river crossing. Each of these phases may require a separate template.

Tailor the situation templates to your needs by focusing on the factors that are important to the commander or mission area. For example, the situation might focus only on the threat's reconnaissance assets when determining and developing threat COAs. The situation templates you produce might show only the location and movement routes of these assets, their likely employment areas, and their likely NAIs. An aviation unit, for example, might develop situation templates that depict details such as specific radar and ADA weapon locations and their range fans or areas of coverage.

At higher echelons the situation templates will usually focus on culminating points and installations or activities associated with centers of gravity rather than specific military units.

Some situation templates are better presented in a matrix format. Figure 2-15, for example, illustrates a situation template in matrix form that shows one threat COA for an air strike against friendly targets. The timeline indicates spacing between the various groups as well as the time each group is expected within each NAI.

Sometimes, situation templates are replaced by other products, such as a key facilities and targets overlay. Use whatever technique best graphically illustrates the threat's COAs.

Description of the COA and Options:
This is a description of the activities of the forces depicted on the situation template. It can range from a narrative description to a detailed "synchronization matrix" depicting the activities of each unit and BOS in detail. It should address the earliest time the COA can be executed, timelines and phases associated with the COA, and decisions the threat commander will make during execution of the COA and after. You use the COA description to support staff wargaming and to develop the event template and supporting indicators.

NAI / TIME	H-20min	H-16min	H-14min	H-9min	H-7min	H-3min
NAI 1	EW package	ADA suppression package	Strike package	Fighter intercept package		
NAI 2		EW package	ADA suppression package	Strike package		
NAI 3			EW package	ADA suppression package	Strike package	
NAI 4				EW package	ADA suppression package	Strike package
NAI 5		Fighters attack AWACS			Fighter intercept package	Fighter intercept package
NAI 6					EW package	ADA suppression package
NAI 7 (target area)						EW package

Figure 2-15. Situation templates can take the form of matrices.

Start with the description of preferred tactics that accompanies the doctrinal template. As you mentally wargame the situation template, note when and where you expect the threat to take certain actions or make certain decisions, such as transition to pre-battle formations, execute branch plans, etc. Record each event into the description of the COA. Where possible, tie each event or activity to TPLs or other specific geographical areas on the situation template. This will help you later when constructing the event template.

As the threat force approaches DPs or option points, record each decision and its timeline into the COA description. The description you develop forms the basis for the development of threat branches or sequels, should they be necessary to support friendly planning. Also record any decision criteria that are associated with each DP.

Develop the description of the COA into as much detail as time allows and the situation requires. Address each of the BOSS. Use whatever tools or techniques best satisfy your needs. For example, you might use a time event chart or a simple narrative description. Given enough time, you might develop an elaborate matrix. See Chapter 3 for examples.

Regardless of the form initially chosen, the COA statement will be refined to greater detail during the staff wargaming of potential friendly COAs.

High Value Targets:
As you prepare and mentally wargame the situation template, note how and where each of the BOSs provides critical support to the COA. This leads to identification of HVTs. Use the list of HVTs in the threat model as a guide, but do not be limited by it. Determine the effect on the COA of losing each HVT and identify likely threat responses.

The relative worth of each HVT target will vary with the specific situation under consideration and over the course of the COA's conduct. Identify the times or phases in the COA when the target is most valuable to the threat commander and make the appropriate notations on the list of HVTs.

Transfer the refined and updated list of HVTs to the situation template. You will use the list to support staff wargaming and the targeting process.

Note on the situation template any areas where HVTs must appear or be employed to make the operation successful. Focus on their locations at the times they are most valuable, or just before. These are potential TAIs and engagement areas. Cross-reference each potential TAI with the description of the COA that accompanies the template.

Additional Considerations:

- When considering an attacking threat, less detailed resolution is required. For example, depending on the situation, a friendly defending battalion might need only to work to a level of detail of threat companies. Considering the possible variations in the threat's COA based on the details of employment of the individual platoons adds a tremendous amount of effort to the process, perhaps more than the results will justify.
- When considering a defending threat, a greater level of detail might be required. For example, an attacking battalion might concern itself with individual antitank or crew-served weapons positions. A greater level of detail in resolution is generally required during operations other than war as well.
- Consider each BOS and its role in making the COA successful. Do not limit yourself to a discussion of the maneuver forces. Address the concept of operation and how it is supported, not just the disposition of forces.